

Message Text

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45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 301046Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6696

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12682

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, SREF, VN, VS

SUBJECT: UNHCR DELEGATE'S TRAVEL TO VIETNAM

REF: STATE 148937

1. THE AMBASSADOR MET ALEXANDRE CASELLA ON JUNE 27 AND EXPRESSED THE USG'S CONCERN OVER THE FATE OF THE AMERICANS HELD BY THE PRG IN PLEIKU. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO NOTED OUR INTEREST IN MR. LEWIS, CAPTURED AT PHAN RANG, AND GAVE CASELLA A LIST OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS AND A COPY OF THE JUNE 4 UPI REPORT. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE HOPED THAT UNHCR WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN RETURNING THE REMAINS OF THE TWO MARINES KILLED AT TAN SON NHUT APRIL 29. CASELLA TOOK THE INFORMATION BUT REFRAINED FROM MAKING A SPECIFIC COMMITMENT.

2. CASELLA SAID HE HOPED TO OPEN HIS OFFICE IN SAIGON IN THE NEAR FUTURE BUT WAS STILL UNCERTAIN WHEN HE WOULD RECEIVE FINAL PRG PERMISSION. HE NOTED THAT THE PRG IS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE AND THAT THE ISSUE OF THEIR REPRESENTATION IN SAIGON WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE THE UNHCR WOULD BE ALLOWED TO OPEN ITS OFFICE.

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3. CASELLA STATED THAT THE PRG IS CLEARLY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATION WITH THE U.S. THE RECENT PRG DECISION TO ALLOW A U.S. QUAKER GROUP TO COME TO VIETNAM WAS A DELIBERATE SIGNAL ACCORDING TO CASELLA. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THIS DID NOT APPEAR TO BE REFLECTED IN RECENT PRG PUBLIC STATEMENTS WHICH CONTINUED TO CONTAIN UNREASONABLE DEMANDS SUCH AS PAYMENT OF WAR REPARATIONS.

4. CASELLA SAID UNHCR HAS CHARTERED A ROYAL AIR LAO DC 4 TO FLY SUPPLIES TO SOUTH VIETNAM. THE CHARTER WILL ALSO BE USED FOR THE REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE IN THAILAND WHO WANTED TO RETURN AND TO BRING FOREIGN NATIONALS OUT OF SAIGON. CASELLA SAID UNHCR STILL HAD NOT RECEIVED RTG APPROVAL TO OPERATE THE FLIGHTS OUT OF BANGKOK. HE INTENDS TO TAKE THE MATTER UP WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER UPON HIS RETURN FROM PEKING. (CASELLA INFORMED AN EMBASSY OFFICER JUNE 29 THAT STARTING MONDAY, JUNE 30, UNHCR WOULD RUN DAILY FLIGHTS CARRYING SUPPLIES BETWEEN VIENTIANE AND SAIGON. HE SAID UNHCR HAD RECEIVED WORD FROM SAIGON THAT THERE SHOULD BE THIRTY SEATS AVAILABLE ON THE RETURN FLIGHT TO VIENTIANE ON JUNE 30. CASELLA INTERPRETED THIS TO MEAN THAT THE PRG MIGHT ALLOW THIRTY FOREIGN NATIONALS TO LEAVE ON THE JUNE 30 FLIGHT.)

5. ON THE MATTER OF THE REPATRIATION OF 44 VIETNAMESE IN THAILAND, CASELLA SAID THE DETAILS WERE STILL BEING WORKED OUT. ONE POSSIBLE SNAG IS THAT THE PRG NOW INSISTS THAT THE TUG 240, WHICH CARRIED 34 OF THE VIETNAMESE TO BE REPATRIATED, BE RETURNED AS WELL. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WHILE MAP EQUIPMENT CLEARLY REVERTED TO THE U.S., THE TUG HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE GVN BY USAID AND WE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK ON ITS LEGAL OWNERSHIP. CASELLA SPECULATED THAT IF THE USG RETURNED THE TUG TO THE PRG, THE PRG MIGHT BE MORE WILLING TO RETURN THE REMAINS

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OF THE TWO MARINES.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE A LEGAL DETERMINATION ON THE RESIDUAL OWNERSHIP RIGHTS TO TUG 240.

WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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